13

An Anthropology of Love: Caritas in Veritate

MARY SHIVANANDAN, STD

Professor of Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family at The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the interconnection between philosophic and theological ideas on love, marriage, and the human person and scientific discoveries of human fertility. The Catholic Church holds that there can be no contradiction between reason and faith because God is the author of both revealed truth and the truths discovered by human reason in the created world. While faulty theories of biology have distorted the truth of the human person and marriage in the past, the new more complete discoveries of human fertility have brought new insights into the nature of man and woman, procreation, and the bond of spousal and maternal love. Three philosopher/theologians have been at the forefront of developing a theology to meet the challenges of new discoveries of human fertility in the 20th century, which for the first time enable couples to consciously achieve or avoid pregnancy. Dietrich von Hildebrand, influenced by the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, analyzes marital love in the light of new thinking on the subjectivity of the person. It is not enough to view conjugal sex simply from its procreative end. It has an intrinsic human value from the fulfillment it brings, which in the case of wedded love he calls *supervalue response*. The intensity of the sex act, which is always in danger of overwhelming the spiritual dimensions of the person, finds its fulfillment in a total mutual self-surrender of the whole of life in

the sight of God. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II continues the emphasis on total mutual self gift in marriage, developing what is called the *logic of the gift* from God's creation of the world out of love and man and woman's imaging of the mutual self-giving of the divine Persons in the Trinity. He finds in the body itself "anticipated signs of the gift." Pope Benedict XVI proposes for the first time that the Church's teaching on human life and love has a pivotal role to play in society and human development not least because it brings to the public square the concept of the human person as fundamentally ordered to relation and not simply an autonomous individual, with consequences for all human activity.

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this paper will consider the unity of faith and science, showing how the Catholic Church holds that there can be no contradiction between them. It will go on to show how different scientific theories influence philosophic and theological accounts of the human person, procreation, gender, and vice versa. The newer, more complete discoveries in the 20th century, by challenging traditional scientific, philosophical, and theological interpretations of marriage and procreation, have contributed to a great development in the theology of marriage. The second part of the paper will briefly outline the theological anthropologies of three philosopher/theologians at the forefront of these new developments.

THE UNITY OF SCIENCE AND FAITH

In the modern era, science and faith are often perceived as opposed to one another. The scientific community recalls the Church's condemnation of Galileo and theologians are troubled by what they call "scientific universalism" or the tendency of contemporary science to absolutize the scientific method to the exclusion of other methods of accessing truth. Pope Benedict XVI describes this as considering only "the kind of certainty resulting from the interplay of mathematical and empirical elements. … By its very nature it excludes the question of God, making it appear an unscientific or pre-scientific question" (Benedict XVI 2006, "Faith, Reason and the University," no. 5). This dichotomy was not always the case. In an earlier era, science and faith worked hand in hand in search of truth. A major reason for this happy collaboration

was that science (*scientia*) referred to everything constituting rational thought, not only facts about nature and its internal laws, but deductive judgments of philosophy and theological reason. It implied a study of the respective nature of actual beings according to the formal object of the specific science. The formal object of theology is God, of philosophy Being, and of the physical sciences the phenomena of nature (Aquinas 1945, *S.T.*, Q. 1:1). In this view, scientific reasoning arrives at truth from the conformity of its reasoning to the object under consideration (*adaequatio intellectus et rei*).[1] The certitude claimed is that of scientific judgment, which is based on its agreement with other judgments and on the facts themselves. Scientific judgments or the judgments of reason apply as much to the practice of philosophy and theology as to the physical sciences. The trend in the modern era to exclude from the domain of science all but observed phenomena, has driven a wedge between truths acquired by the modern scientific method and by faith. There is no room for a God who reveals objective truths about himself and the world.

Thomas Aquinas

At the beginning of his monumental *Summa Theologica* on the nature of God, man, and the cosmos, Thomas Aquinas explains why revelation is necessary. Although many truths even about God himself can be discovered from creation through reason, these truths would be known only by a few after a long time and with the admixture of many errors (Aquinas 1945, *S.T.*, Q1:1). Secondly, men and women have an eternal destiny, which can only be known through revelation. The *Summa Theologica* is itself a masterly integration of the truths of Aristotelian science and philosophy with Christian faith. In fact that was Thomas's great work, according to Pope Benedict. He was not afraid to encounter the pre-Christian culture of Aristotle with its "radical rationality." He created a synthesis, showing how they belonged together. "What seemed to be reason incompatible with faith was not reason, and what seemed to be faith was not faith, in so far as it was opposed to true rationality" (Benedict XVI 2010, "General Audience," no. 2). Pope Benedict XVI credits Aquinas especially with showing the natural harmony between Christian faith and reason and bringing about the rapprochement between biblical faith and Greek philosophical inquiry. He considers this integration to be of "decisive importance not only from the standpoint of the history of religions, but also from

that of world history" (Benedict XVI 2006, "Faith, Reason and the University," no. 3). There can be no contradiction between faith and reason, since the author of creation and revelation is one and the same God.

The Church has continued to take this position even when it was challenged by the rise of Cartesian dualism and the explosion of scientific discoveries in the 19th and 20th centuries. Both the First and Second Vatican Councils have reaffirmed the compatibility between reason and faith.. For example, the First Vatican Council states:

> The same holy mother, the Church, holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things by the natural power of human reason: ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature has been perceived in the things that have been made. It was, however, pleasing to his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal laws of his will to the human race by another, and that a supernatural way ... it is, indeed, thanks to this divine revelation, that those matters concerning God which are not of themselves beyond the scope of human reason, can, even in the present state of the human race, be known by everyone without difficulty, with firm certitude and with no intermingling of error. It is not because of this that one must hold revelation to be absolutely necessary; the reason is that God directed human beings to a supernatural end, that is a sharing in the good things of God that utterly surpasses the understanding of the human mind. (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, nos. 13-15; the Second Vatican Council fathers echo this statement in *Dei Verbum*, no. 6)

"John Paul II and Knowledge as Encounter"

Above all, their unity was taken up by John Paul II in his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (*Faith and Reason*, hereafter FR), where he states that the "unity of truth is a fundamental premise of human reasoning, as the principle of noncontradiction makes clear. Revelation renders this unity certain, showing that the God of creation is also the God of Salvation History" (FR, nos. 34 and 9). In explaining the reasonableness of faith, John Paul II points out that more truths are simply believed than acquired by personal verification. This is as true in the field of science as of faith. "In believing we entrust ourselves to the knowledge acquired by other people" (FR, no. 31). Therefore, all knowledge

involves an interpersonal relationship, entrusting oneself to another. The truths of faith and reason both meet in the human person and depend on his capacity both to know and to entrust himself to another.

In his interpretation of the text of Genesis, which gives a theological account of the creation of man, it is significant that John Paul II begins with the text, "'It is not good that man [male] 'should be alone; I want to make him a help similar to himself'" (Gen 2:18). The starting point is one directly concerned with relationship or the lack thereof (John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman*, no. 5:2). It is within the context of relationship that man comes to knowledge of himself and the world. Knowledge comes through an encounter with objective reality, whether the cosmos, himself or another human being. Angelo Scola has developed most fully the nature of knowledge as encounter (Scola 2005, pp. 224-227). He has coined the term "symbolic ontology" to capture the fact that being cannot be grasped directly by man. It does not mean that man cannot touch the real itself through intuition but the real communicates itself in a sign to form concepts. This encounter constitutes an event. Man must choose it in freedom, but the thing always remains other. This otherness or difference allows for relationship and encounter. Sexual difference is a primary form of otherness. John Paul II emphasizes that knowledge comes by way of experience, our ordinary human experiences. The appeal to experience is fundamental because man is a body. He goes so far as to say that "our experience is in some way a legitimate means for theological interpretation" (John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman*, no. 4: 4, 5 and fn. 8). Although faith and science are two distinct disciplines, they meet in the human person and his experience.

John Paul II summarizes his argument as follows. It is the nature of the human person to seek truth, not just partial truths from empirical or scientific evidence or the true good in individual acts of decision-making. The person looks for an ultimate truth that would explain the meaning of life. The search can only end in "reaching the absolute," as the ancient philosophers concluded. But the search for truth also needs trust and friendship, which was well accepted by these philosophers. Therefore, there is both "a search for truth and a search for a person to whom they might entrust themselves." Christian faith offers Jesus Christ, both true God and true man. Through the order of grace Christ offers participation in divine mysteries and coherent knowledge of the Triune God. Through his humanity, the goodness

of the order of creation is confirmed. There can be no contradiction between the order of faith and the order of reason, both of which are united in the person of Christ. In entrusting themselves to the person of Jesus, believers find a *fullness* of truth not available to reason alone (FR, no. 33).

Especially important in the Genesis text is the use of the verb "know" for conjugal relations. It means first of all that the biblical text raises the level of the conjugal act from the merely biological to the personal. Secondly, in the biblical understanding of "know" there are two aspects, intentionality and the reality of the union in one flesh. Both the husband and the wife know each other reciprocally and by doing so discover the depths of their own specific "I." Each is known as an "*unrepeatable feminine or masculine 'I'*" (John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman*, no. 20:5). This reciprocal knowledge, he says, "establishes a kind of personal archetype of human bodiliness and sexuality" (John Paul II 2006, no. 21:1). He goes on to say that

> the 'man' who for the first time 'knows' the woman, his wife, in the act of conjugal union is in fact the same one who—in giving names, that is, also, by 'knowing'—differentiated himself from the whole world of living beings or *animalia*, thus affirming himself as a person and a subject (John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman*, no. 21:1).

Canadian philosopher, Kenneth Schmitz has brought out well the relational dimension of knowledge not just of one human being to another but of things in themselves in a metaphysics of being. "Knowledge," he says, "is precisely the relation in and through which we come to know things as they are in their own being" (Schmitz 2008, p. 11). By being intelligible to man, things are rendered explicit in themselves. This makes them available for a relationship in which they retain their own integrity. In giving themselves they also affirm their identity (Schmitz 2008, p. 11). According to David Schindler, "Knowing at root is but the distinctly cognitive manner of participating in the relations of love and beauty implicit in an ontology of creation" (Schindler 1999, p. 527). He proposes that "knowledge is first and foremost a matter of relation, the order of which is disclosed in the creation of all things by and in the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ" (Schindler 1999, p. 527). In love the subject discovers the self in relation first to the Other who gives himself together with the gift of the world. The relationship with God is primary. Therefore there is a priority of the 'objective'

as already given as a gift of God and the world. "What this means," says Schindler, "is that knowledge takes its first and most basic order from within relation or relationship defined by love and beauty, which originates in submission of the self to the other (God and all others in God)" (Schindler 1999, p. 527).

It is clear then from these fundamental biblical texts that: the search for truth about God, the world and man himself takes place only in interpersonal relationship; and through the conjugal act, man comes to the truth about himself and his creation in love. The search for truth by science and faith cannot be separated because they both meet in the human person who is a unity of body and soul. Furthermore the human person is made for love, especially the fundamental love between man and woman in marriage. Both science and faith are necessary for an anthropology of love.

Interaction between Scientific Theories of Reproduction and Philosophy/Theology

In the past, inadequate and/or incorrect scientific explanations of biological facts have contributed to faulty interpretations of the nature of the human person, fertility, and gender, with detrimental effects on both theology and philosophy. In its turn theology has continually reflected on scientific discoveries and theories, keeping in mind the dignity of the human person and marriage. Before the 18th century, when modern scientific methods were applied to the study of biology, two theories predominated on the process of conception in the human being.

Aristotle & Aquinas

Aristotle hypothesized from his study of animals and his philosophic theory of potency and act that the male provided the seed and the female the matter. It was from the male that the new human being took its soul or form, while the female only provided the matter. Furthermore, the only way a female could be conceived was if there were some defect in the male seed/form, so in essence the female was a defective male (McLaren 1984, p. 16; see also Allen 1997, pp. 95-102). It is not hard to imagine what effect this may have on the philosophic understanding of masculinity and femininity. Aquinas struggled to make this congruent with revealed truth on the equal dignity

of man and woman as image of God. His commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians is a good illustration of difficulties in interpreting the biblical text in light of the sex polarity inherited from Aristotle (see Aquinas 1966, pp. 216-217).

Hippocrates & Galen

The other theory put forth by Hippocrates and taken up by Galen in the 2nd century AD was that both the man and the woman provided the seed. Furthermore, in order for conception to take place sexual pleasure was necessary to provide the stimulus to activate the process. Since both shared in the process and sexual pleasure was necessary for both, it resulted in a greater equality between the sexes, at least in this one area, in marriage (McLaren 1984, pp. 17, 18-20).[2] The effects of this theory are evident in the way marriage was lived among Protestants (Puritans included) and among Catholic moralists, who regarded procreation as the end of marriage. The view that Puritan couples expected to enjoy friendship, affection and sexual pleasure within marriage is confirmed by secular historians John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman (see D'Emilio and Freedman 1989, p. 16). It must be noted that Aquinas, following Aristotle's *Ethics* had legitimated sexual pleasure in marriage in a more explicit way than St. Augustine, so that the Council of Trent in 1546 declared that concupiscence was the "germ" of sin but not in itself sinful (Gardella 1985, p. 13). The American bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick in his discussion of desire in his *Theologiae Moralis* wrote: "There are some more severe philosophers who reject all enjoyment, but, as St. Thomas [Aquinas] said, they counsel badly." He also argued that consent to passion resulting from a good act, was itself another good act (Gardella 1985, p. 12). This belies conventional wisdom that an appreciation for sexual pleasure in marriage originated in the 18th century. The opposite may, in fact, be more accurate with regard to the role of woman and sexual pleasure.

Modern Theories of Conception

A change came at the beginning of the 19th century when medical science applied the new experimental methods to embryology. Both the role of the sperm and the ovum in conception were discovered, along with the fact that sexual pleasure in the female was not necessary for conception (McLaren 1984, pp. 23, 26, 27). This discovery,

when coupled with cultural forces of the time, led to the unforeseen consequence of assigning a passive role to the female. As one historian commented, "the medical literature depicts a change from the sexually active woman of the seventeenth century to the passionless creature of the nineteenth" (McLaren 1984, p. 27).

From these examples it can be seen how scientific theories of human conception interact with philosophical and theological concepts of the nature of man and woman and marriage. Not surprisingly, new discoveries in the 20th century, especially of the reproductive hormones in fertility, had equally profound effects on philosophical and theological concepts of love and marriage. It is noteworthy here how many of the medical researchers, such as Doctors John and Evelyn Billings, were motivated by their Catholic faith. John Billings, a neurologist, was asked to assist married couples coming for instruction in fertility regulation at a Catholic Marriage Guidance Center in Melbourne, Australia in 1953. Together with his wife, Evelyn, he devoted the rest of his medical career to developing the Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning (Shivanandan 1999, pp. 279-280). Because so much attention has been paid to the Church's opposition to contraception, little attention has been given outside the Church to the challenges posed by these new discoveries to the theology of marriage within the Church.

For the first time in history, with the development of the natural methods of family planning, couples are able to monitor their fertility accurately and make a conscious decision whether to conceive a child or not through periodic abstinence. New questions arose: "Is this legitimate? What now are the respective roles of love and procreation in marriage?" One of the first manuals published on the Rhythm Method devoted Part III to the ethical aspects. It begins with the questions: "Is it wrong to take advantage of the rhythm of sterility and fertility, to practice a natural method of birth control? What does the Pope say?" Out of forty pages dealing with ethics, only six refer to the illicitness of contraception. The rest are all concerned with the licitness of Rhythm (Latz 1932, pp. 110-151). To this day heated debates continue on these very issues.

As a result, the 20th century has seen the greatest development of the theology of marriage since the high Middle Ages and that is thanks, in part, to the new and more accurate understanding of fertility achieved by modern science. Three philosopher/theologians have been at the

forefront of grappling with these challenges and for the remainder of this article I shall outline the key contribution of each.

AN ENRICHED ANTHROPOLOGY OF LOVE

Dietrich von Hildebrand

Dietrich von Hildebrand, a German Catholic philosopher, brought to bear the phenomenological method of Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler to an investigation of love and marriage. His first book on the subject, with the seemingly paradoxical title, *In Defense of Purity*, was published in English in 1931. It was not, in his own words, a defense of purity and virginity "against his detractors" but a study of what constitutes "the complete virtue of purity" von Hildebrand 1970, p. v). The decisive factor for purity, whether in virginity or marriage, is the person. In other words, without understanding the nature of the person and love, neither Christian marriage nor virginity can be understood.

"THE NATURE OF PURITY"

Von Hildebrand begins by distinguishing between the sexual appetites and other appetites of the body such as eating and drinking. These appetites remain on the surface, whereas sexual desire reaches to man's deepest being and overflows into the psychological and spiritual spheres. Here the body and soul meet in a singular fashion. His purpose is to argue for the significance of conjugal sex beyond its biological end of procreation. As a phenomenologist he takes into account the *experience* of physical sex as providing a fullness of completion. It has a significance for man *as such*, not just as the propagator of the species. Such an attitude was challenging to the Catholic theologians and canonists in the 1920s. Equally challenging to sexologists such as Havelock Ellis[3] was his contention that only in wedded love between a man and a woman is the meaning of sex as intimate mutual self-donation and self-revelation to be truly found (von Hildebrand 1970, p. 12).

He is emphatic that the love between a man and a woman is not a sublimation of the sex instinct. Love can be understood without any reference to sex. Wedded love itself does not depend on the physical aspect. What distinguishes it from other forms of love is the particular completion between the man and the woman that takes place in the conjugal act. Wedded sex can only be understood from above;

otherwise the ultimate significance is lost (von Hildebrand 1970, pp. 7, 9-10). Von Hildebrand notes intrinsic dangers to marital love stemming from the intensity of the sex act itself. It is as it were the "awakening of corporeal nature." The spirit is exposed to being "swamped" by the convulsive nature of the sex act, tending to drag it into the domain of the body. There are two senses in which the person can be carried away and lose possession of himself, one in spite of himself and the other by deliberately throwing himself away in the heat of the moment. To do so in the sex act without a corresponding giving away of oneself in the spiritual sphere is to risk flinging away one's very existence. There needs to be a more powerful spiritual experience, fully anchored in God, which sanctions the flinging away of self, and which paradoxically ends in finding oneself. This legitimation occurs in marriage (von Hildebrand 1970, pp. 61-65).

There are two attitudes that essentially belong to wedded love, first the desire to "share in the *being* of the other, not just in his or her life and thoughts" (von Hildebrand 1970, p. 67) and secondly the surrender of oneself to the other for the whole of life, a giving over that must take place in the sight of God. Only such love can transform the conjugal act into one that is truly pure. "Wedded love alone," says von Hildebrand, "holds … the key, which by realizing it, can unlock the significance of sex as an experience and reveal to the person its true positive aspect" von Hildebrand 1970, pp. 68, 69).

Published in German in 1927, von Hildebrand's *In Defense of Purity* had a profound effect on Pope Pius XI, at a time when the Church was faced with widespread advocacy of contraception in the name of marital love. When the worldwide gathering of Anglican bishops met in England at Lambeth Palace in 1930 and endorsed the limited use of contraception in marriage, Pius XI issued a papal encyclical. The encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, reaffirmed the Church's ban on the use of contraception in marriage for any reason. This encyclical was binding on all Roman Catholics. While the language of the encyclical was traditional in style, referring to marriage as a contract rather than a covenant, there is one paragraph, which confounded many in the Church since it advanced what was referred to as a "personalist" view of marriage.

> This mutual inward molding of husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense, as the Roman Catechism teaches, be said to be the chief reason and purpose of

> matrimony provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of the child, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof (*Casti Connubii*, no. 14).

This paragraph was left out of the translation copyrighted in 1951 by the National Catholic Welfare Association of the United States (now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) perhaps to forestall any interpretation that procreation was no longer considered the primary end of marriage (Shivanandan1999, p. 199, fn76). *Casti Connubii* was first published in German as *Die Ehe*. Dietrich von Hildebrand draws attention to this paragraph in a book for the general public he later wrote on marriage, which was published in English in 1942. In the preface to the English edition, von Hildebrand notes how his ideas brought about an increased stress on the role of love in Christian marriage in Italy and France in the years between the wars (von Hildebrand 1991, pp. vi, vii).

"personalism and marital love"

In all his writings on ethics and marriage, von Hildebrand contrasted the philosophy of personalism, which emphasizes the spiritual nature of man in a unity of body and soul, with biological materialism, which views man as simply a superior animal. The notion of "subjectivity" (or *Eigenleben*) is central to von Hildebrand's ethics of personalism. The interest in the objective good for persons is not the whole of the moral life. The subjective element, affirming the value in the objective good is necessary. Such an affirmation is called a value response. Von Hildebrand discerns three kinds of value: the subjectively satisfying; the objectively good in itself; and the objectively good for the person or the beneficial good (von Hildebrand 2009, p. xvii).[4] It is the nature of the person to transcend himself in seeking the value or good in an object. Von Hildebrand further distinguishes two kinds of persons, those who bend to themselves what is merely subjectively satisfying in the object, and those who live by value response. A value is revealed as value precisely through its capacity to give delight. It can be both objectively good in itself and a beneficial good for me. Love is a "super-value response" because in love each becomes objectively good, a delight, for the other. The lover wills to be the source of happiness for the beloved and also to receive from her his deepest happiness.. What constitutes love as super-value response is the lover's self-giving. In a relationship

that is merely subjectively satisfying, the person bends the other to his own benefit without giving himself in return (von Hildebrand 2009, pp. xvi, xxiv, xxv). This articulation of love as super-value response enabled von Hildebrand to give full value to the reciprocal self-giving at the heart of marriage, expressed in ecstatic sexual union, while at the same time, distinguishing it from what is merely subjectively satisfying, the pursuit of sex for its own sake.

John Paul II & the Logic of the Gift

While von Hildebrand wished to stress the spiritual dimension of the conjugal union, raising it to the level of the person from the merely biological, John Paul II sought to discover how the body, far from being a hindrance to the spiritual, has the capacity in itself for expressing love. In fact it is specifically designed to express love. He approached the subject of conjugal love from both metaphysics (philosophy) and later, revelation (theology). His treatise, *Love and Responsibility*, was published in Poland in 1960 and translated into English in 1981. In a remarkable statement, he writes, "The sexual urge is something even more basic than the psychological and physiological attributes of man and woman in themselves, though it does not manifest itself or function without them" (Wojtyla 1993, p. 49). It follows from the contingent nature of the person, who needs another for completion and at the same time wishes to share his riches with another. In other words, it has a spiritual source and is more strongly linked to the spiritual nature of the person than the biological.

"philosophic analysis"

Common language makes the distinction between an object, even a living object as *some/thing* and a person who is *some/one*. To treat a person, *some/one*, as some thing is to treat him as less than human. Wojtyla cites the categorical imperative of German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, "Act always in such a way that the other person is the end not merely the instrument of your action." Wojtyla expands the axiom further by saying that in any action between persons the other must always be treated as a personal subject and not merely as an object. He notes that this lies at the basis of all human freedoms (Wojtyla 1993, pp. 27, 28). It is especially important in the sexual relation, where the other is in one sense an object of the sexual urge. What

raises the action to the level of persons is love, which receives the other as gift.

"But how does a person enjoy sexual relations without using the other person?" Karol Wojtyla examined this dilemma in his philosophical treatise, *The Acting Person*. He distinguished between what merely happens in man and what he chooses to do. Hunger, thirst, and sexual desire are what happen in man. It is the task of the person to integrate what happens in him into a human act, an act that ensures the primacy of the spiritual nature of man, his reason and well-being over the physical and emotional drives. In the sexual sphere this obviously means not suppressing the sexual urge, which is a good in itself, and oriented to the survival of the species, but channeling it to express love (Wojtyla 1993, p. 123). As experience teaches, chastity or self-mastery over the sexual urge comes only after much effort. It is both motivated by love and enables love. Here is the great strength of periodic abstinence in Natural Family Planning as it facilitates self-mastery.

Love is in essence the affirmation of the value of the person. In order truly to give herself in the sexual relation, the woman, especially, needs to value herself as a person and also value the man as a person, because the paradox of erotic love is that the person wishes to surrender his very being to the other. Only if the sexual relation is an expression of a unification through the total mutual gift of self in *marriage*, will the lover not lose himself but gain himself in a new way. Indeed by going outside himself (ecstasy) each finds a fuller existence in the other (Wojtyla 1993, p. 129, cf., pp. 125, 126).

"theological analysis"

The future Pope John Paul II discovered the truth about love, especially erotic love and its relationship to self-gift, by reason. He turns to Revelation for the full understanding of what theologically is described as the *logic of the gift*. The first verse of the Bible reveals God as creator of the universe out of nothing: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Canadian philosopher Kenneth Schmitz points out that reason alone could not postulate creation out of nothing as it is beyond human experience and comprehension (Schmitz 1982, p. 13). Creation is a freely willed gift of the Creator, who does not have to create. He creates out of the desire to share his goodness (*bonum diffusum sui*). Subsequent biblical verses tell how man is made in God's image and is called to a one-flesh union with

the woman. Love is both the motive of creation and its *raison d'etre*. As the highest point of creation, man and woman are ultimately called to share in the mutual self-giving love of the three divine Persons in the Trinity.

Only if man and woman are equal as persons but different can they find fulfillment and happiness in mutual self-giving. It is the body in its masculinity and femininity that reveals both the similarity and difference and the call to communion. The body itself is nuptial or spousal. It speaks a language of which it is not the author. It speaks the language of fidelity and total self-giving in marriage and the language of deception outside of marriage. In the Old Testament the language of the body provides the key analogy for the fidelity or infidelity of God's people. In the New Testament, the love of Christ for the Church is compared to the love of the bridegroom for the bride. The husband is admonished to give himself up for his wife as Christ gives himself up for the Church (Eph 5:26) .(John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman*, no. 92).

"the body oriented to self-gift"

In his encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II speaks of finding "anticipated signs, the expression and the promise of the gift of self" in the body (*Veritatis Splendor*, no. 48). In commenting on the different bodily constitution of man and woman, he says "we know in fact today that it is different even in the deepest bio-physical determinants" (John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman*, no. 21). Science has unveiled the difference. It reveals the equal but different roles of the male and the female in creating new life, with the woman's cervical mucus guiding, protecting and nourishing the sperm; it shows the part hormones play in bonding between the man and the woman in sexual union and between mother and child during nursing. Feminist author, Emily Martin, who has made a study of medical textbooks on human reproduction, is troubled by the trend of pushing back the boundaries of the body to the cellular level so that no matter what the intentions of the couple, within their bodies a "cellular 'bride' (or *femme fatale*) and a cellular 'groom' (or her victim) make a cellular baby" (Shivanandan 2000, p. 172). John Paul II, far from being troubled by such an interpretation of human love and procreation, goes so far as to declare, "In the whole perspective of his own history, man will not fail to confer a nuptial meaning on his own body." In spite of many distortions, "it will

always remain the deepest level, which demands to be revealed in all its simplicity and purity, and to be shown in its whole truth, as a sign of the 'image of God'" (John Paul II 2006, *Man and Woman* , no. 15).

Pope Benedict & Caritas in Veritate

Pope Benedict, in his turn, has boldly taken up the theological and philosophical reflections on human and divine love of both von Hildebrand and John Paul II.

"EROS AND AGAPE"

At the beginning of the first encyclical of his pontificate, *Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*; hereafter DCE), he reiterates what John Paul II had already affirmed, the unity of *eros* and *agape* in the conjugal embrace. They must be united because "it is neither the spirit alone, not the body alone, that loves; it is man, the person, a unified creature composed of body and soul" (DCE, no. 5). *Eros* is often referred to as ascending love since it arises in the body and moves toward possession of the beloved while *agape* is called descending love, which is of divine origin and seeks the good of the beloved (DCE, no. 7)..

As von Hildebrand pointed out, *eros* as sexual desire can either elicit a subjectively satisfying response in the lover or move to a true value response of the person through love (*caritas*). Pope Benedict sees them as seamlessly united in both human and divine love. What is more, *eros* has its place not only in man's ecstatic love of God but in God's love of each person. The total self-gift of Christ on the cross is the supreme example of the unity of *eros* and *agape* in divine love (DCE, nos. 10, 12). "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 Jn 4: 9).

"*HUMANAE VITAE* AND INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT"

Pope Benedict's first encyclical is not primarily about the love between a man and a woman, but the love of God and neighbor as it pertains to justice and charity in the Church's social mission. What was surprising in it is the analysis of the two kinds of love, *eros* and *agape* and their intimate relationship in both human and divine love, as a prelude to the practical aspects of Christian charity in the world. What is unexpected about the encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*; hereafter CIV), yet follows logically from *Deus Caritas Est*, is the proposal

for the first time that the Church's teaching in *Humanae Vitae* (*Of Human Life*) is essential to true human development (CIV, no.28). Secular development agencies have generally viewed the Church's insistence on openness to life as a perverse block to development, viewing development primarily as material prosperity, without concern for man's spiritual life.

The Church has always insisted on the promotion of "the whole man," not partial aspects such as material needs. If development excludes God, it cannot encompass the value of the whole person (CIV, no. 18). Pope Benedict proposes that *Humanae Vitae*, by marking the strong links between life ethics and social ethics, ushers in a "new area of Magisterial teaching" (CIV, no. 15). In the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (hereafter HV) Pope Paul VI speaks of an "integral vision of man and his vocation," one that includes both "his natural and supernatural vocation (HV, no. 7). Pope Benedict applies this concept to society and speaks of integral human development in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. Responsible procreation has a particular contribution to make to integral development, especially through its promotion of the "beauty of marriage and family, institutions which "correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person" (CIV, no. 44). The person received as gift and called to communion is above all lived out in the family.

In the chapter of the encyclical on "*Fraternity, Economic Development and Civil Society*," Pope Benedict defines the meaning of charity in truth (*caritas in veritate*) as placing man before "the astonishing experience of gift." The truth of the human being is that he is gift and made for gift. First and foremost the human being receives his being from an "Other" as a fruit of God's gratuitous love. In the same way the truth of ourselves is given to us. "Truth, like love, 'is neither planned not willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings" (CIV, no. 34). In an echo of von Hildebrand, Pope Benedict speaks of the superabundant nature of gift. It overflows in communion. In fact the logic of fraternity can and must overflow into normal economic and political activity, not instead of, but together with it (CIV, nos. 36, 37). Attitudes of gratuitousness cannot be legislated. Such attitudes are developed in the family through the reciprocal gift of self. Pope Benedict affirms John Paul II's emphasis on the human being as fundamentally relational. A philosophical understanding of interpersonal relations greatly aids their personal development. The person does not mature except in

relation to others and God. Christian revelation confirms reason in providing the example of the interpersonal relations in the Trinity, where the community does not annihilate the individuality of each divine Person. It is the same way in the family (CIV, nos. 53, 54, 55).

John Paul II has cited both the family and the state as the place where the greatest abuses can occur because every person is born into a family and into a state. It is imperative that in both societies the dignity of the person be upheld. At the dawn of modern democracy, political theorists such as John Locke proposed the contract as the primary bond linking individuals to the state. The contract is not grounded in the relational notion of the human person but in the autonomous individual and his rights. For Locke every society is formed by voluntary contract and can be dissolved by the consent of its members whether it has fulfilled or perverted its purpose. Even in the case of marriage, Locke did not rule out the separation of husband and wife whether the children had reached maturity or not (Yolton 1977, p. 238).

As we have seen in the 20th century, this notion of contract has spread from the larger entity of the state to the family in a more radical way, so that, with the new reproductive technologies especially, it is not nature or even nurture that unites family members but arbitrarily chosen relations through contracts. In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict seeks to reverse the order and to extend the covenantal relations in the family, predicated on the person as a freely willed gift called to communion, to the larger society. Principles of justice and equality in difference lie at the core of the family as well as society. This article does not allow space for elaborating on how Pope Benedict develops this concept. Suffice to say that it is through the quality of mercy that a relational concept of the human person would be extended from the family into society.

Conclusion

The Church & Reproductive Science

By opposing contraception and various reproductive technologies, is the Church opposed to all technological developments in human fertility? By no means! The modern methods of Natural Family Planning are based on the latest scientific discoveries and the Church welcomes new research, such as that on adult stem cells, which bring great promise of healing. Pope Benedict affirms:

True progress does not arise primarily from doing. Progress is first an intelligence capable of thinking in a technical way and perceiving clearly the human meaning of a human action, in the perspective of the significance of the person viewed in the totality of his being. [6]

Far from being opposed to technology, the pope calls it a "profoundly human reality, linked to the autonomy and freedom of man" (CIV, no. 69). Technology "touches the heart of the vocation of human labor" because it enables man to exercise dominion over matter and to improve the conditions of life. It is in a sense "a response to God's command to till and to keep the land (cf. Gen 2:15)" (CIV, no. 69). The painstaking labor of scientific research, which discovered the secrets of human fertility, made possible this very conference, yet technology is not enough. It needs to be set in the context of the person in the fullness of who he is and his call to communion. It needs *caritas in veritate*, that is, charity in truth.

END NOTES

1. An excellent contemporary discussion of the traditional holistic view of science can be found in "Bishop Lafitte's address to the White Mass, www.zenit.org/article-28849?1=English, ZE10040301-2010-04-03; accessed May 2011.
2. Galen, however, was less supportive of breastfeeding, believing that "carnal copulation troubleth the blood, and so by consequence the milk," a view which may have influenced husbands to send their infants to wet nurses (see Hardyment 1983, p. 4).
3. Havelock Ellis was at the forefront of the sexual revolution. He authored six volumes entitled *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (published between 1897 and 1910) in which he attacked almost every aspect of the Judeo-Christian heritage on marriage and sexuality. He questioned marriage as an institution, holding that it stifled passion. He approved of cohabitation before marriage, masturbation and even homosexual behavior. (See D'Emilio and Freedman 1989, p. 224.) In his highly popular book *The Dance of Life*, he advocated an aesthetic morality that adhered to no rules, concluding: "In so far as we can infuse it [morality] with the spirit and method of art, we have transformed morality into something beyond morality; it has become the complete embodiment of the Dance of Life." (Ellis 1923, p. 270.)
4. This summary is taken from the introductory study by John Henry Crosby. In discussion of von Hildebrand's treatment of conjugal sexuality, it is important to state that it does not preclude the concept of original sin. As John Paul II later would say, sin originates in the heart with the

imperfection of self-gift. Any expression of genital sex outside marriage is by its very nature defective in total self-gift.

5. In a study of Natural Family Planning manuals of instruction, both secular and Catholic, words such as harmony, gift, and union predominate. Martin sees the aggressive and hostile words used to describe the same facts in secular medical textbooks, as reflecting a contemporary culture hostile to women and their bodies (see Shivanandan 2000, pp. 170-182).

6. *Etenim vera progressio non ex faciendo potissimum oritur. Profectus principium est intellectus, technicam artem cogitandi percipiendique plane humanum sensum humanae actionis capax, in conspectu significationis personae, quae tota in sua essentia suscipitur*. The translation given in this paper is that of the author and replaces the one in the official translation, which does not seem to the author to capture the full significance of the Latin text: "The key to human development is a mind capable of thinking in technological terms and grasping the fully human meaning of human activities within the context of the holistic meaning of the individual's being." For example, "*humanae actionis*" or human action has a particular meaning in Thomistic philosophy in reference to action that is specifically human as opposed to animal and the translator has lost the significance of the concept of person by translating it "individual." "Person" has the implication of transcendence that the word "individual" does not possess.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Allen, Prudence. 1997. *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C. to A.D. 1250*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Aquinas, Thomas. 1966. *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*. Aquinas Scripture Series. Albany, NY: Magi Books.

Benedict XVI. 2005. *Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*). Papal encyclical. *Origins* 35(33): 541-560.

_____. 2006. "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections." Lecture, University of Regensburg, Germany, September 12, 2006. The Holy See online. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html; accessed May 2011.

_____. 2009. *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*). Papal encyclical. Washington, DC:

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

_____. 2010. "General Audience: Saint Thomas Aquinas." General Audience, Vatican City,

June 2, 2010. The Holy See online. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100602_en.html; accessed May 2011.

D'Emilio, J. and E. B. Freedman. 1988. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Ellis, Havelock. 1923. *The Dance of Life*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

First Vatican Council. 1869-1870. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, Ch. 4 "On Faith and Reason" and Canon 4. EWTN. www.ewtn.com/library/councils/vi.htm; accessed July 2010.

Flannery, O.P., Austin. Ed. 2004. *Vatican Council II,Tthe Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company.

Gardella, P. 1985. *Innocent Ecstasy: How Christianity Gave America an Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hardyment, Christina. 1983. *Dream Babies: Three Centuries of Good Advice on Child Care*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

John Paul II. 1993. *Veritatis Splendor* (*The Splendor of Truth*). Boston: St. Paul Books and Media; see also, *Origins* 23 (18).

_____. 1998. *Fides et Ratio* (*Faith and* Reason). Papal encyclical. *Origins* 28 (19).

_____. 2006. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media.

Latz, L. J. 1934. *The Rhythm of Sterility and Fertility in Women*. Chicago: Latz Foundation.

McLaren, A. 1984. *Reproductive Rituals: The Perception of Fertility in England from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Methuen.

Paul VI. 1973. *Humanae Vitae* (*Of Human Life*). Papal encyclical. In *Good News for Married Love*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 33-78; see also Holy See online, www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html; accessed May 2011.

Pegis, A. C., Ed. 1945. *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. New York: Random House.

Pius XI. 1930. *Casti Connubii* (*Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI on Christian Marriage*). Boston: St. Paul Books and Media; see also Holy See online, www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121930_casti-connubii_en.html; accessed May 2011.

Schindler, D. L. 1999. "God and the End of Intelligence: Knowledge as Relationship." *Communio* 26 (3 Fall): 511-540.

Schmitz, K. L. 1982. *The Gift: Creation*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press.

_____. 2008. *"Human Nature and Human Culture." A Common Morality for the Global Age: In gratitude for what we have been given*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, Center for Law and Culture, unpublished paper.

Scola, A. 2005. *The Nuptial Mystery*. Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Shivanandan, M. 1999. *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage*. Edinburgh:

T&T Clarke.

_____. 2000. "Body Narratives: Language of Truth?" *Logos* 3: 166-193.

von Hildebrand, D. 1970. *In Defense of Purity*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press.

_____. 1991. *Marriage: the Mystery of Faithful Love*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute

Press.

_____. 2009. *The Nature of Love*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press.

Wojtyla, K. 1979. *The Acting Person*. Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel.

_____. 1993. *Love and Responsibility*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.